

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
FDRE-00 HEW-06 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02
SCA-01 SCSE-00 USIA-15 EB-07 IO-14 AGRE-00 IGA-02
L-03 /142 W

-----028086 211725Z /46

R 211415Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5422
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 10202

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJ: WFP/BANGLADESH 1089 - ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD AND TORNADO
VICTIMS; POLICY ISSUE

REF: A. STATE 130913 B. STATE 113301 C. ROME 8644
D. ROME 7650 E. DACCA 2723

SUMMARY: A CHALLENGE TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S APPROVAL OF
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR FLOOD AND TORNADO VICTIMS WOULD SEEM
TO DEPEND PRIMARILY ON WHETHER THERE ARE LARGE NUMBERS OF
EFFECTED PEOPLE. GOBD, UNDRO, UNDP RES REP AND FAO REPORTS
ASSERT THAT THERE ARE. EMERGENCY APPROVALS MUST BE CONSIDERED
QUITE SEPARATELY FROM EFFORTS TO RATIONALIZE THE IMPORT SCHEDULE.

1. IT WAS NOT TO BE EXPECTED THAT SENIOR WFP OFFICIALS WOULD
AGREE WITH THE LINE TAKEN IN REFTEL (A). REPORTS FROM THE FIELD
SINCE APRIL AND OFFICIAL FAO REPORTS BEGINNING WITH THE APRIL 14
FOOD CROPS AND SHORTAGES REPORT (BUT SEE PARTICULARLY THE MAY 11
REPORT) EMPHASIZE SIGNIFICANT CROP LOSSES AND HUMAN SUFFERING
AS A RESULT OF THE FLOODS AND TORNADOES. BANGLADESH IMPORT
REQUIREMENTS CLEARLY HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THESE ACTS OF NATURE,
BUT THE REAL POINT OF THE GOBD ARGUMENT WITH RESPECT TO EMERGENCY
ASSISTANCE IS THE NEED FOR SPECIAL RELIEF TO 700,000 AFFECTED
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PEOPLES. IF THIS IS IN FACT THE CASE THEN IT IS HARD TO
FOLLOW THE ARGUMENT THAT THE PROPOSALS DO NOT MEET THE EMERGENCY
CRITERIA.

2. SIMILARLY, WHILE THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER GRANTS, CONCESSIONAL
SALES AND REGULAR IMPORTS AFFECTS GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY
TO TAKE CARE OF THE SITUATION (AND IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN WFP

REACTION), IT DOES NOT APPEAR ARGUABLE THAT REQUIREMENTS HAVE INCREASED BECAUSE OF THE NEED FOR SPECIAL FEEDING AND AT THE SAME TIME CROP LOSSES ARE SIGNIFICANT. THUS THE CHANGE IS HARDLY NORMAL, BUT RATHER APPEARS TO BE THE DIRECT RESULT OF THE KIND OF ACT OF NATURE SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO IN THE EMERGENCY DEFINITION.

3. THE 18,900 TON PROGRAM APPROVED MAY 12 WAS JUSTIFIED ON THE BASIS OF FEEDING FLOOD/TORNADO AFFECTED DISASTER VICTIMS FOR THREE MONTHS. WHILE THE INITIAL APPLICATION WAS FOR ONE YEAR, IN ACCORD WITH NORMAL PRACTICE WFP REDUCED THE PERIOD TO THREE MONTHS BUT LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF LATER CONSIDERATION DEPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING THE REACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY. GOBD HAS KEPT UP THE PRESSURE FOR AN ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION. PRESENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION IS A PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE TOTAL TO 50,000 TONS, A REDUCTION FROM THE REPORTED INITIAL REQUEST OF 75,000 TONS, WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY UNDP RES REP AND UNDRO.

4. ISSUE OF WHETHER IT IS APPROPRIATE TO APPROVE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR EFFECTED PEOPLE IS QUITE DISTINCT FROM THE EFFORT TO RATIONALIZE THE FLOW OF IMPORTS. IT IS QUITE COMMON FOR EMERGENCY OPERATIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT WITH AVAILABLE STOCKS, QUOTE BORROWED UNQUOTE, AGAINST WFP COMMITMENT TO REPLACE. IF THE SUPPLY LINE IS FULL ENOUGH THE REPLACEMENT CAN TAKE PLACE MORE LEISURELY, BUT THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE DISTRIBUTION. (NOTE, HOWEVER, IN THIS PARTICULAR UNCLASSIFIED

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CASE THE RES REP RECENTLY HAS BEEN ARGUING THAT THE SITUATION IS TIGHT AND ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES ARE URGENTLY NEEDED BETWEEN NOW AND DECEMBER.)

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5. WFP/ROME IS RELATIVELY RELAXED ABOUT THE METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION IN THE SENSE THAT THOUGH THE APPROVAL IS FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION, QUOTE WHAT HARM IS DONE? UNQUOTE IF THE SITUATION MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR SOME WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE DISASTER VICTIMS. AS SEEN FROM HERE, THIS IS ONE OF THE EFFECTS OF KHASRU (GOBD) INSISTENCE THAT WORK RATHER THAN THE STRAIGHT DOLE IS TO BE PREFERRED WHENEVER IT CAN BE ARRANGED. (U.S. DELEGATES TO RECENT CFA WILL RECALL HIS SOMEWHAT IMPASSIONED REMARKS ON THIS POINT.) SO LONG AS THE MOST DESTITUTE VICTIMS ARE PROVIDED FREE RATIONS AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES ARE IMPLEMENTED TO ENSURE THAT THE DISASTER VICTIMS DO NOT ALSO GET RATIONS FROM THE ON-GOING FOOD FOR WORK (OR, PRESUMABLY, VULNERABLE GROUP FEEDING) PROJECTS, WFP SEES NO REAL PROBLEM IF SOME VICTIMS WORK AND SOME DO NOT. THE REVERSE ARGUMENT -- THAT THE REGULAR FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAM AND/OR VULNERABLE GROUP FEEDING SHOULD BE EXPANDED TO ACCOMMODATE THE DISASTER VICTIMS -- DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW, FROM ALL INDICATIONS COULD IN ANY EVENT ONLY PARTIALLY COVER THE PROBLEM IN THE AFFECTED AREAS, AND WOULD PROVIDE GREATER DISTORTIONS TO THE NORMAL DEFINITIONS, PROJECT AND EMERGENCY.

6. REGRET REF (B) WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY ANSWERED. IT WAS OUR UNCLASSIFIED

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UNDERSTANDING (AND THAT OF WFP - SEE REF (C) THAT IT HAD BEEN TAKEN CARE OF IN CONVERSATIONS WITH SHEEHAN. WFP HAD NO REAL INTENTIONS AT THAT TIME WITH RESPECT TO THE 75,000 TON FIGURE EXCEPT AS WAS REPORTED REF (D). THE SOURCE OF SUPPLY DEPENDS CONSIDERABLY ON DONOR ATTITUDES. FROM WHAT CAN BE GATHERED HERE THE EEC AND FRG HAVE NO QUALMS ABOUT SUPPLYING AND PRESUMABLY WOULD BE LEADING CANDIDATES IF THE U.S. CONTINUES TO BE RELUCTANT. HOWEVER, THIS IS SPECULATION, AS THE CONSIDERATION OF AN INCREASE IN THE TONNAGE HAS NOT YET REACHED THE POINT OF SUPPLY CONSIDERATION. WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE EEC ALREADY IS SUPPLYING 30,000 TONS TO BANGLADESH FROM THE SPECIAL EMERGENCY RESERVE AND FRG 40,000 TONS BILATERAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, AND THIS MIGHT HAVE SOME LIMITING EFFECT ON ADDITIONAL REACTIONS. SURELY WFP'S PREFERENCE, IF THEY DO APPROVE ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES, WOULD BE TO TAP THE INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY FOOD RESERVE. THE INITIAL PROGRAM IS BEING SUPPLIED BY CANADA.

7. WHETHER THIS IS A LEGITIMATE CASE TO CHALLENGE THE APPLICATION

OF POLICY (PARA 4 REF (A)) WOULD SEEM TO DEPEND ON WHETHER AN URGENT SITUATION EXISTS AS A RESULT OF AN EVENT WHICH CAUSES HUMAN SUFFERING, I.E. WHETHER IN FACT THERE ARE A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, VICTIMS OF THE FLOODS AND TORNADOES. GOBD, UNDRP, THE RES REP AND THE FAO REPORTS ARGUE THAT THERE ARE, AND USAID DOES NOT APPEAR TO DENY IT, RATHER ARGUING THAT THE REQUEST IS TOO BIG AND THAT A PREFERRED REACTION WOULD BE BETTER TARGETING OF REGULAR FFW AND VULNERABLE GROUP PROGRAMS. GARDNER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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